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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 SANTO DOMINGO 004387

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR WHA, WHA/CAR, INL/LE, INR/SAA; NSC FOR SHANNON;
USSOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD; DHS FOR CIS-CARLOS ITURREGUI

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TAGS: [DR](#) [VE](#) [CU](#) [SNAR](#) [PGOV](#) [KCOR](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: DOMINICAN POLICE COMMAND AND TRAINING CLOUDED BY
POLITICS

Classified By: DCM Lisa Kubiske for Reason 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: Deputy police chief Brig. Gen. Guzman Fermin (protect source) told DCM on September 19 that Interior and Police Minister Franklin Almeyda is undermining the authority of recently named police chief Gen. Rafael Santana Perez. Guzman warned of problems in the chain of command. Guzman is concerned that training scheduled by a U.S. educational institution could impede an Embassy-sponsored program to assist in the professional development of the Dominican National Police. He undertook to discuss his concerns with the police chief. End summary.

12. (C) Deputy chief of National Police (PN) Brigadier General Rafael Guzman Fermin (strictly protect) called on DCM September 19 to discuss his concerns about problems in the unity of command and discipline in the police. He also discussed potential problems with the current programs of police training. DCM was accompanied by NAS, LEGAT, RSO, DAO, and political officers. DCM requested the meeting after the PN deputy chief (protect) had alerted NAS police advisor to these issues.

Too Many Trainers

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13. (C) Guzman was concerned that there was a lack of coherence in efforts to improve the level of police performance. He referred to an August memorandum of understanding between Interior Minister Franklin Almeyda and officials of the John Jay College of Criminal Justice of the City University of New York. The intent is to provide training to Dominican police and other law enforcement personnel, including prosecutors. Guzman said he strongly preferred to continue with the substantial Embassy NAS assistance for reform of the curriculum at the Dominican Police Academy.

14. (C) Almeyda had good intentions, said Guzman, but "bad advisors" were telling the minister that he did not have to arrange police training through the Embassy -- instead, he could go directly to the source. The DCM asked what we could do about this; Guzman undertook to discuss it privately with the police chief and keep us informed about advisable next steps.

15. (C) Guzman said that Almeyda had in the past received Venezuelan officials who had proposed exchanges between Venezuelan and Dominican police. He did not know whether this proposal was likely to be pursued.

Undermining the Chief

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16. (C) Police Chief Gen. Santana Paez was appointed on August 17 to succeed Gen. Perez Sanchez, who had found himself frequently in conflict with Almeyda. Deputy Chief Guzman admitted that he had wanted the job; the new chief and he have been "enemies -- competitors." Guzman's father was police chief under Balaguer in 1969-70 and 1974-75.

17. (C) According to Guzman, Almeyda is already treating the new chief with disrespect. At an internal meeting on September 17, Almeyda chewed out the chief in front of several subordinates over a budget management issue, with a veiled threat to remove him if he didn't shape up. Guzman suggested they continue the discussion in private, which they did.

18. (C) Guzman criticized Minister Almeyda for undermining the hierarchy in the police by removing oversight of various bodies from the national police chief. According to the deputy police chief, Almeyda has transferred control of 18,000 of the total 33,000 PN personnel to Major General Guerrero Peralta, a retired police chief from the Mejia era reappointed by President Fernandez as the presidency's National Director for Preventive Security. These agents include those of the traffic police and the tourism police. They are part of a "preventive police" program to deploy more cops on the street to confront rising crime. The advisor

issues orders to these units and reports directly to the Interior Minister, leaving out the PN chief, deputy chief and inspector general. Guzman said that additional transfers will be made, to bring the number under Guerrero Peralta's control to 26,000.

19. (C) In Guzman's opinion, Almeyda is creating a "parallel police," diluting the authority of the chief and creating problems of discipline and unity of command. Guerrero Peralta wants to return to his old job as the chief, Guzman believes.

Another Command Change Ahead?

10. (C) Deputy Chief Guzman predicted a confrontation soon between the interior minister and police chief. Guzman also anticipated that he himself would have a run-in with police advisor Guerrero Peralta, who has a "conflictive personality." Guzman professed to be unconcerned about the risk of losing his job; what mattered to him was the good of the PN. Guzman said, he had offered to accompany new chief Gen. Santana Paez to meet President Fernandez, to try to straighten out this mess and to clarify command responsibilities, "I have more prestige in the PN," Guzman asserted. "The chief knows hardly anyone in the ranks. I'm his main support."

Confronting Corruption

11. (C) Guzman said that Almeyda had ordered the dissolution of 152 police companies, each of which has been led by a captain who is a political appointee. This has been a traditional source of corruption. Many of the police are detailed out to private or other public entities and draw salaries separate from their PN pay. The captain arranges the details and pockets a percentage of the second salary. Almeyda has denounced this practice, saying that 15,000 of the 33,000 total members do not in fact work for the PN. To curb this abuse, the captains and the police in the companies are now to be reassigned to the "preventive police." Almeyda has declared that those not doing regular police work will have their salaries reduced to a single symbolic peso.

Comment

12. (C) Deputy Chief Guzman is known to the Embassy as a highly professional and competent officer. Although he clearly has an axe to grind and ambitions to burnish, we take his views seriously. Interior Minister Almeyda had already established a reputation for difficult relations with his PN subordinates. Further command changes may be in the offing. Embassy will collect additional information from Guzman and other contacts and will assure that ongoing USG/NAS assistance to the police avoids duplication of training efforts,

MINIMIZE CONSIDERED

KUBISKE